THE POCAHONTAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

MARLINTON
WEST VIRGINIA

Pocahontas County was formed in 1821 and the original courthouse was built at Huntersville, the first county seat. In 1891, with great plans for the coming of the railroad and a new town at Marlinton, the citizens of Pocahontas voted to move the county seat six miles west to Marlinton. Thus, construction was begun in 1893 on the present courthouse, on property which occupies a full city block on Tenth Avenue in Marlinton. The name Marlinton was changed from Marlin's Bottom only seven years before. At that time there were only five families here. The settlement and establishment of Marlinton is closely related to the development of the railroad and timber industry in the region. And the courthouse itself was the focus for this rapid expansion of the county and the town.

The Courthouse is a two story, brick, Victorian Romanesque structure. It has irregular massing with a central block that has a steep hip roof. On the front elevation, there are two dissimilar towers, one at each corner. The east and west side have projecting gabled pavilions, as well as gabled dormers in the roof on each of these elevations in the Southern portion.

Inside, a major feature is the vertical board hardwood wainscoting in all the rooms. Doors are original hardwood, as well as the stairs and balustrade with handcarved newel posts of the main staircase. A two story brick jail in simple Romanesque style is located back of the courthouse.

While M.F. Giesey of Wheeling, West Virginia was the major architect, he teamed with Joseph Warren Yost, a prominent Columbus architect of courthouse structures in Ohio. At completion in 1895, cost of the courthouse was about $28,000.

The growing potential of the timber and other resources of the county emphasized the need of a railroad to take the timber to market, rather than rafting it down the river. After many delays due to the financial situation in the nation and changes in location, the first train of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad finally came to Marlinton on October 26, 1900, amidst a wild celebration which included a barbecue, polo, tournaments, a football game and welcoming speeches.

Certainly, the existence of the Pocahontas County Courthouse was a major factor in creating the establishment of the lines of communications, commerce, industry and most recently tourism.

Additions to the courthouse have been tastefully integrated to fit into the style of the structure.

The courthouse continues as the center point for Pocahontas County, and still serves the County and its citizens, with a full complement of employees.

Pocahontas County
Historic Landmarks Commission

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Pocahontas County Tourism Commission
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